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C O N F I D E N T I A L ATHENS 001340

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [GRO](#)

SUBJECT: FM BAKOYANNIS ON KOSOVO, MACEDONIA, MIDDLE EAST

REF: ATHENS 1318

Classified By: CHARCE D'AFFAIRES THOMAS COUNTRYMAN. REASONS
1.4 (B) AND (D).

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: In a twenty-minute June 28 conversation, Charge and FM Bakoyannis discussed the Greek-Russian handshake on the Blue Stream pipeline deal (reported reftel), her recent trip to the Middle East and the issues of Kosovo and Macedonia. She said she intended to call U/S Burns at the end of this week to update him on the Middle East and Kosovo, in line with their June 10 Athens agreement to stay in touch. END SUMMARY.

MIDDLE EAST

¶2. (C) At a social event Tuesday night, Charge had an unscheduled 20-minute one-on-one with FM Bakoyannis. Much of the conversation focused on the June 25 Greek-Russian handshake on the Blue Stream pipeline, which was reported in reftel. Another important topic was the Middle East. Bakoyannis clearly was continuing to think about her recent trip (June 10-14). She believed that her interlocutors in the region find it much easier to talk openly to Greeks, Italians, and Spaniards than they do to Americans and other Europeans. She said she was &deeply involved& in trying to help the government of Lebanon (no further details) and wanted to share some ideas with U/S Burns. She remained concerned about the risk of violence in Lebanon and on Israel's north.

KOSOVO

¶3. (C) Charge and Bakoyannis also discussed the June 17-19 visit to Athens of Serbian FM Jeremic and Bakoyannis, conversation in Istanbul with Russian FM Lavrov during the BSEC Summit. She said that Jeremic had conceded that Serbia would not gain much more on the ground from an additional 4-6 months of negotiations with Pristina, but it was vital to make the effort. She agreed strongly, saying the U.S. and EU should show that we had gone the extra mile. A Russian veto at this point would simply insert Russia back into the Balkans in a negative way, she said, rather than in the positive manner we should all want.

¶4. (C) She said Lavrov had shown no flexibility on Kosovo in their June 25 meeting, arguing that the Russian public sees Kosovo as the standard against which to measure Abkhazia. Charge acknowledged that giving more time for Kosovo talks might show our good will and give Belgrade time to reconcile itself to the inevitable. For the U.S. (and others with

presence in Kosovo, including Greece), however, extending the time would run a high risk of violence in Kosovo. Bakoyannis emphasized that she did not discount the risk of violence but said we had to keep it in perspective. Kosovo would become more tense than it is today, but that did not mean that the international community would be unable to control the risk. Spain had just lost six peacekeepers in Lebanon, but was staying the course there.

15. (C) Bakoyannis said the idea she wanted to push with U/S Burns was for an alternative, placeholder UN Resolution, with only three simple elements:

-- Creating a new negotiation period of four (or six) months between Belgrade and Pristin but without specifying any pre-determined or automatic outcome.

-- Calling on the EU to proceed with decision and deployment of the ESDP mission.

-- Creating a mechanism by which Kosovo could qualify now for IFI assistance. (Charge commented that he did not think this last point was so simply accomplished, but she insisted it could be done and referred to financial agreements she made with Kosovo authorities while she was still mayor of Athens).

MACEDONIA

16. (C) Charge noted that the Greek press had been critical of U/S Burns, advice on Macedonia/FYROM two weeks ago (which the papers had distilled down to &Burns to Athens: Solve it Yourself!8). Bakoyannis said only that she was not dissatisfied with what Burns had said but so far had not seen any results from Skopje of the U.S. intent to push Macedonia to calm the rhetoric. She readily agreed to Charge,s suggestion that we sit down soon to think through the real sequence of events (Greek elections, NATO accession decision) and the consequences of various Greek options.

COUNTRYMAN